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Coast Guard Cutter *Forward* moors in Freetown during African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership mission

The Coast Guard Cutter *Forward* moored in Freetown, Sierra Leone, concluding their first official African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) mission July, 3 2011.

Since getting underway, *Forward* hosted seven members of the Sierra Leone Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) and one member of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Fisheries who, with support from the *Forward*'s law enforcement team, led six boardings at sea, issued potentially \$250,000 in fines for various violations, and escorted two ships back to port in Freetown.

Most APS missions are not law enforcement related; however, APS has grown a branch program called AMLEP which has been developed to actively conduct combined maritime law enforcement operations in the region. By incorporating U.S. Coast Guard Cutters and their LEDETs embarked on U.S. Navy ships, this brings the U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement authority into the operation.

"The aim of the AMLEP mission is to assist our host nation teams in conducting actual law enforcement operations to enforce national laws and regulations in their waters, with the goal of developing long-term stability, economic prosperity and security on and off shore in West Africa," said Coast Guard Cmdr. Michael Stewart, Coast Guard Cutter *Forward*'s commanding officer.

Throughout the mission, the *Forward*, a 270-foot medium endurance cutter home ported in Portsmouth, Va., will travel to various countries in West Africa and conduct engagements with each host countries' maritime law enforcement and Coast Guard services. The *Forward* is one of 27 medium endurance Coast Guard cutters designed with the ability to travel internationally and conduct these unique partnership missions in West Africa.